Mill Girl Follies

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HISTORICAL VAUDEVILLE

based on the 'Bread and Roses' strike

FEBRUARY 20 - 28
8:00 pm
Emerson College
69 Brimmer Street
Boston, Mass.

MARCH 3 - 5
8:00 pm
Heritage Visitors' Center
corner of Jackson and Canal Streets
Lawrence, Mass.

EMERSON COLLEGE
Division of Performing Arts

presents

"MILL GIRL FOLLIES — 1912"

Historical Vaudeville based on the Bread and Roses Strike

by
Elana Dorfman, Wendy Lement, Steve Nakrosis,
Neige Torre and Ann Marie Wysocki

Edited by Ron Jenkins and Blanche Linden-Ward

DIRECTOR
Ron Jenkins

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
Elana Dorfman
Wendy Lement
Ann Marie Wysocki

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Steve Pults

CHOREOGRAPHER
Ann Marie Wysocki

DIALECT COACH
Kenneth Crannell

SCENE DESIGN
Tim Jozwick

COSTUME DESIGN
Mary Ellen Adams

LIGHT DESIGN
Nancy Goldstein

SOUND DESIGN & COLLAGE
Wendy Lement

SLIDE DESIGN
Ann Marie Wysocki

SETTING

A union meeting hall in Lawrence, Massachusetts on February 24, 1912. The Textile workers have been on strike from the Mills since January 12, and have decided to vent their opinions about the strike in a satirical vaudeville show.

The production will be performed without intermission.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This play marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the 1912 Textile Strike in Lawrence, Massachusettes, a landmark event in the history of the American Labor Movement. The clashes between the strikers and the state militia could easily be theatricalized in tragic vein, but we chose a comic perspective as a tribute to the worker's ability to persevere in the face of adversity. Comedy is based on hunger (remember Chaplin eating his boot in "The Gold Rush"), and the strikers in Lawrence were hungry. They were hungry for food, hungry for dignity, and hungry for justice. The satirical songs and posters that were produced by the International Workers of the World during the strike expressed those hungers in comic terms. Our play is inspired by the spirit of those songs and images.

The research and writing of this play was done collectively by Emerson Graduate students enrolled in a seminar with me and Blanche Linden-Ward, a historian who directs the college's program in American studies. We gathered our material from archives in Lawrence, newspaper accounts of the strike, and oral history interviews. The words you hear on stage are often quoted directly from participants in the strike. Some of it was taken from the transcripts of the congressional hearings investigating the strike. As is often the case today, some of the best comic material is generated in Washington.

At some point in our research, labor history and theater history began to merge. We discovered that Lawrence was one of the nation's most active centers of vaudeville. An examination of the songs and texts of the vaudeville entertainers helped explain why the immigrant workers found the popular stage so appealing. The themes of the comics and singers were themes that touched the workers' lives closely: economic hard times, urban assimilation, etc... These issues were presented in an entertaining format, but there ws a core of pain in many of the routines. The vaudeville stage seemed to promise that all difficulties could be overcome through laughter and song. Perhaps the strikers were borrowing their cue from vaudeville when they sang popular songs on the streets during their marches. The music helped to bolster their courage and foster a sense of solidarity. Our union vaudeville show is a fictional event, but it is woven together from the songs, stories, and courage of the strikers that eventually enabled them to emerge from their struggle with victory. It took two long winter months, but the workers went back to the mills with higher salaries and a renewed sense of their dignity. They won their bread, and their roses too.

-Ron Jenkins

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https://archive.org/details/millgirlfolliesf00unse

CAST
(In Alphabetical Order)

Carol Emerson
Keith Eveslage
Claudia Giaquinto
Wendy Lement
Patty Lund
Martha McIntosh
Steve Pults
Elisa Smul
Darin Templeton
Ann Marie Wysocki

Production Stage Manager.....Sarah Weatherwax
Technical Director.....Keith Cornelius
Master Carpenter.....Steven Hillson
Construction Running Crew.....Chris Alifier
Scott Barrow, Becky Wolf
Scene Painters.....Elana Dorfman. Margaret Gibson
Dena Isaacson, Wendy Lement, Fran Weinberg
Ass't Light Designer.....Kathryn A. Levin Lambert
Light Board Operator.....Jennifer Buzzell
Lighting Crew.....David Clemons, David Hale
Donna Knowlton, Lori Newell
Robert Pyzocha, Lou Razionale
Costumer.....Alison Reich-Bond
Assistant Costumer.....Laura Yousik
Costume Running Crew.....Jamie Lujan, Loren Hession
Properties Manager.....V Kingsley
Asst. Properties Manager.....Carlo Cuesta
Publicity.....Fran Weinberg, Carol Emerson
Photographer.....Karen Couture

88-005

Division of Performing Arts Staff

Acting Chair.....Mary Harkins
Special Asst. to Chair.....Kathy Drennan
Administrative Assistant.....Linda Thompson
Technical Director.....Keith Cornelius
Production Manager.....Marc Rosenbush
Master Carpenter.....Alan Gilbert
Scenic Designer.....Tim Jozwick
Scenic Artist.....Margaret Gibson
Assistant Scenic Designer.....Elana Dorfman
Lighting Designer.....Nancy Goldstein
Asst. Lighting Designer....Kathryn A. Levin Lambert
Master Electrician.....Yvonne Reis
Electrician.....Robert Pyzocha
Sound/Asst. Electrician.....Jeff Sammon
Costumer.....Alison Reich
Assistant Costumer/Cutter.....Laura Yousik
Props Master.....V Kingsley
Assistant Props Master.....Carlo Cuesta
Costume Construction Crew.....Bettina Geyer
Jaime Lujan, Heather Martin, Patrick Rinn
Dwayne Schanz, Darin Templeton, Michael Zecker
Katherine Zeiner, Cheryl Dyer
Scenery Construction Crew..... Robert Allen
Clay Merrill Brown, Frank DeAngelis
Robert Pyzocha, Roger Cilley
Theatre Manager.....Brooks Russell
Box Office/House Manager.....Susan Christiansen
Box Office Staff.....Jim Enriques
Meredtih Murray, Ellen Szorady
Photography.....Robert Colby
Graphic Artist.....Carol Emerson, Wendy Staats
Michael Thurston

SPECIAL THANKS
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Interviewees: Marie Coutremarch, Lillian Donohoe, Ida Priestley, Martin Quinlands